IN THE CLAIMS:

All claim amendments are made without prejudice or disclaimer. Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method for reducing the risk of scoring a false-positive test result ~~in~~ when testing at least one sample ~~derived~~ obtained from a mammal for the presence or absence of an aberrant prion protein, the method comprising:

treating said at least one sample with guanidine thiocyanate or a functional equivalent thereof, without pre-treating said at least one sample with formic acid; and

testing said at least one sample for the presence or absence of an aberrant prion protein.

2. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said method further ~~is for~~comprises reducing the risk of scoring a false-negative test result by increasing the sensitivity of the test.

3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said at least one sample is tested in an immunoassay.

4. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein said immunoassay is designed for mass-screening purposes.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising treating said at least one sample with a protease to reduce the presence of normal prion protein.

6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said mammal is a ruminant.

7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 6, wherein said ruminant is ovine or bovine.

8-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~further comprising:~~wherein treating at least one ~~first~~ sample derived from said mammal with guanidine thiocyanate or a functional equivalent thereof comprises treating at least one first sample, said method further comprising;

leaving at least one second sample ~~derived~~ obtained from said mammal untreated with guanidine thiocyanate or a functional equivalent thereof;

testing said at least one second sample for the presence or absence of an aberrant prion protein; and

comparing the test result of said at least one first sample with said at least one second sample.

11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising immunologically detecting said aberrant prion protein with at least one antibody directed against a proteinase K resistant part of the aberrant prion protein.

12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein said at least one antibody is directed against a proteinase K resistant N-terminal part of the aberrant prion protein.

13. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein said at least one antibody is raised against a peptide derived from the aberrant prion protein.

14. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 13, wherein said peptide is selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOS:7-30 ~~or functional equivalents thereof~~.

15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein said aberrant prion protein is immunologically detected in an enzyme-linked immunoassay.

8-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~further comprising:~~wherein treating at least one ~~first~~ sample derived from said mammal with guanidine thiocyanate or a functional equivalent thereof comprises treating at least one first sample, said method further comprising;

leaving at least one second sample ~~derived~~ obtained from said mammal untreated with guanidine thiocyanate or a functional equivalent thereof;

testing said at least one second sample for the presence or absence of an aberrant prion protein;and

comparing the test result of said at least one first sample with said at least one second sample.

11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising immunologically detecting said aberrant prion protein with at least one antibody directed against a proteinase K resistant part of the aberrant prion protein.

12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein said at least one antibody is directed against a proteinase K resistant N-terminal part of the aberrant prion protein.

13. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein said at least one antibody is raised against a peptide derived from the aberrant prion protein.

14. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 13, wherein said peptide is selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOS:7-30 ~~or functional equivalents thereof~~.

15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein said aberrant prion protein is immunologically detected in an enzyme-linked immunoassay.

16. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein said enzyme-linked immunoassay comprises a dot-blot assay.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A kit of parts comprising ~~means for performing the method according to claim 1~~ a carrier matrix, a buffer, a solution of guanidine thiocyanate or a functional equivalent thereof, and an antibody that recognizes PrP^{Sc}.

19. (Currently amended) The kit of parts according to claim 18, wherein said kit of parts is ~~designed~~ adapted for ~~mass screening purposes~~high-throughput screening.